

## PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. Portuguese Timor occupies the eastern half of the island of Timor in the Indonesian Archipelago. There is also a small Portuguese enclave, Oe-cussi, on the coast of the western, Indonesian part of the island. Its population is approximately 600,000. Up until August 1975 there were approximately 400 Portuguese troops on the island and a further 2,000 native Timorese troops in the territory's armed forces.

2. In early 1975 Portugal indicated its intention to draw up plans for the de-colonisation of the territory. This stimulated the formation of three political parties:

(a) The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) - a moderate right wing party largely composed of Portuguese settlers and Eurasians who favour continuing links with Portugal and a gradual approach to independence.

(b) The Front for the Liberation of East Timor (FRETILIN) - a militant left wing party organised by indigenous Timorese largely on the lines of FRELIMO in Mozambique (with whom the leader of FRETILIN has spent some time). It favoured immediate independence and the complete severing of all links with Portugal.

(c) APODETI - a party largely fostered by the Indonesian Government to promote the integration of Timor into Indonesia. Many of the members of this party had relatives living on the Indonesian side of the border. It did not command wide support in the territory.

3. In late June the Portuguese Government convened independence talks on the island of Macao and invited all three political

/parties

- 2 -

parties to attend. FRETILIN boycotted the meeting in protest against the presence there of APODETI whom they branded as "traitors". The conference in Macao drew up a programme for de-colonisation based on universal elections to a constituent assembly within 12 months and complete independence by October 1978.

4. In early August, disturbed by the growing strength of FRETILIN, the UDT staged a pre-emptive "coup d'etat". They took over various strategic points in the capital Dili, captured the Chief of Police and seized large quantities of arms. They also took control of the airport. The Portuguese Governor took no action to reassert his authority and within a week FRETILIN launched counter-operations. APODETI joined whichever side seemed to be gaining the upper hand at any particular time, largely in order to protect its own existence.

5. By the end of August following the defection (mostly to FRETILIN) of the Timorese armed forces there was a virtual state of civil war on the island. This led to the departure from the island of the Portuguese Governor and the remaining Portuguese troops. They moved to the offshore island of Atauro. The fighting continued in the island on a large scale and 2-3,000 foreigners and people of mixed blood were evacuated, mostly to Darwin.

6. In early September Dr Almeida Santos, the special envoy of the Portuguese Government shuttled between Atauro, Darwin, Canberra and Jakarta in an attempt to reach agreement on ways of restoring peace to the island. The Indonesian Government has stated publicly that it has no intention of intervening in Timor in the absence of an invitation from the Portuguese Government (but see paragraph 8 below). The formation of a four-power joint authority (comprising possibly Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia and New Zealand) has been discussed but no agreement was reached.

/7. In

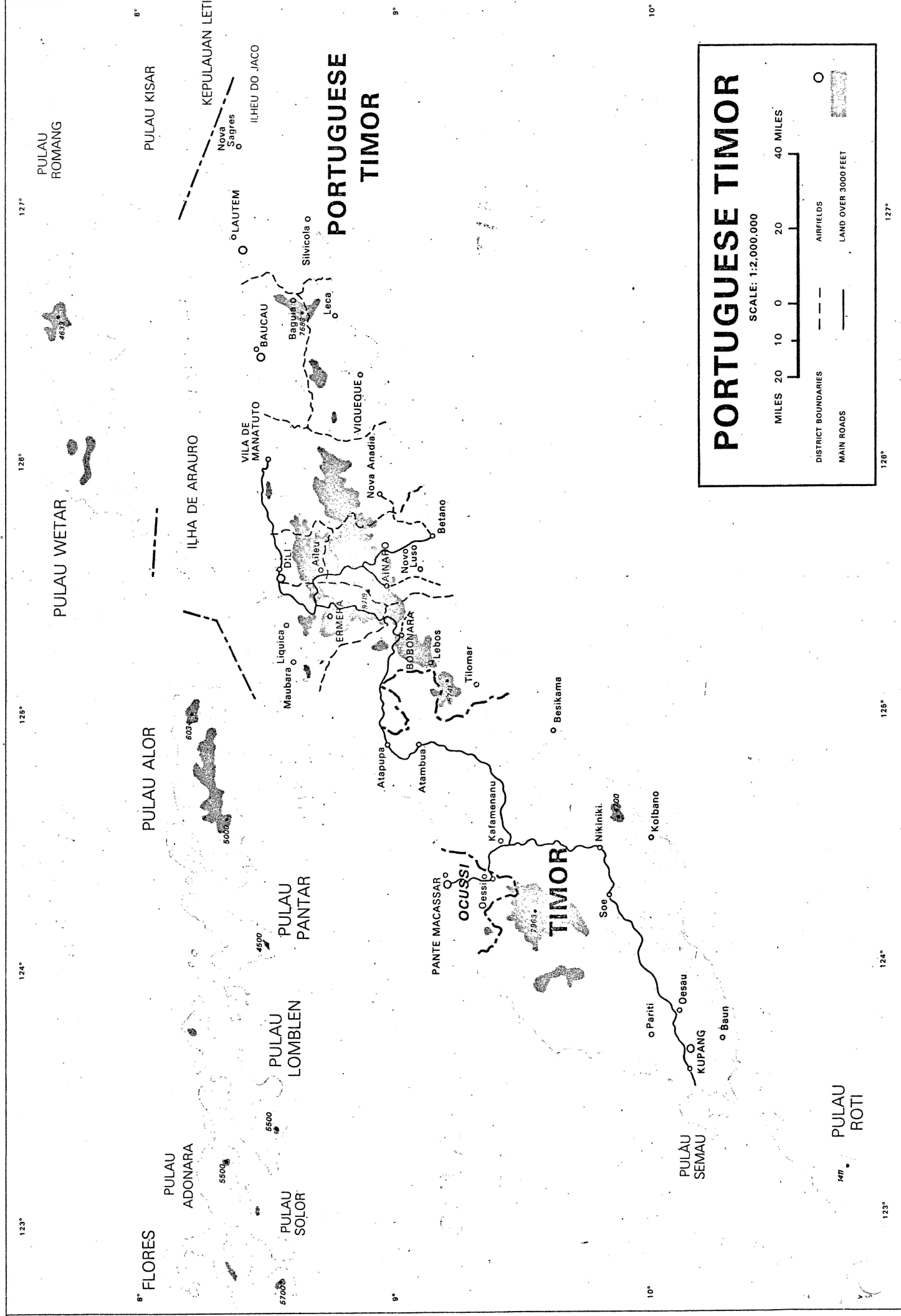
- 3 -

7. In Timor itself FRETILIN gained almost complete control. Latest information suggests that the leaders of FRETILIN are now ready to submit to Portuguese administration once again, and to abandon their plans for immediate independence in favour of a more gradual move towards self-government. However, the Portuguese are reluctant to assume any further responsibilities for the territories. Dr Santos has now become a member of the new Portuguese Government and the Portuguese Governor of Timor has now left Atauro for Lisbon "for consultation".

8. Indonesia and Australia continue to be highly critical of what they see as an abdication of responsibility by the Portuguese. Although President Suharto continues to come under strong pressure from his "hawks" (mainly in HANKAM, the Ministry of Defence, and BAKIN, the State Intelligence Organization) to intervene, he has so far resisted, fearing in particular:

- (a) US Congressional reaction (Indonesia is heavily dependent on the USA for arms supplies)
- (b) Non Aligned countries' reactions: and
- (c) The economic burden of adding Timor to Indonesia's problems.

Nevertheless, Indonesia is keeping her options open by harrasing FRETILIN with Indonesian troops and freshly-armed UDT and APODETI supporters.



# PORTUGUESE TIMOR

SCALE: 1:2,000,000

MILES

20 10 0 20 40 MILES

AIRFIELDS

LAND OVER 3000 FEET

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES    ---  
 MAIN ROADS                ———